

run in five different elections, I can tell you that it's very clear to me that economic strength seems to translate into political strength to a far greater degree than I think is in the best interests of the general public, that those that have the money, that can access the money are the ones that can run for office and those that are unable to do so, but may offer great potential in terms of service to fellow citizens are simply unable to muster the ability to run for office. When you look at U.S. Senate campaigns that cost \$3 million, when you look at gubernatorial races that cost a million and a half dollars, congressional races that cost a million dollars, you know that there are very few people in this state who have the ability to either personally fund such a race or to have friends who can help them fund such a race or have special interests who are willing to provide for them, the financial resources to run for office. This issue is central to, I think, a lot of the problems that we face in our country today as we find more and more disenchantment and disenfranchisement from the political process by the common citizen, the person out there who doesn't have the \$100 or \$1,000 to contribute to campaigns and feels that their voice is not being heard. So the attempt by this Legislature a few years ago to put a cap on campaign spending and to try and address this issue I thought was an act of far-sighted leadership that we should not turn our back on. The question of how we fund it has always been there, but in my view if we can talk last week about \$6 million to the Governor to spend on economic development needs as they see fit, if we have \$6 million to just basically hand over and say good luck to them in how they do that, it seems to me we can find a half million dollars to fund this. I know there are a lot of pressing needs out there, a lot of different demands on the budget, we all know that, but this is a one-time appropriation that may not be needed again in the future because hopefully the limits will work and we won't have to access the public funds. So in my view a half million dollars set aside may or may not even be spent to try to elevate the potential for...of every person in this state to run for office, to be able to afford to run for office, to try and take the power of money and take it down a notch, not that we eliminate it, but obviously put some restrictions on it to the degree that we can, it seems to me that that is a worthy goal and well worth the money that we're talking about. So I rise in support of the Beutler amendment, I rise in support of the concept to try to place limits on campaign funding and trying to do something about the terrible problem that we have in this regard. It, to me, is one of the